

San Antonio Union School District

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March 7, 2002

Honorable Robert O'Farrell
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Grand Jury – County of Monterey
Salinas, CA 93902

Dear Judge O'Farrell:

RE: RESPONSE TO THE 2001 MONTEREY COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

I am writing in response to the Final Report of the 2001 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury regarding the training of school board members.

As superintendent of one of the 24 schools districts "investigated," neither I nor anyone in my district office recalls being asked questions by the grand jury regarding this topic. Since all training and staff development is coordinated through this office for all staff including the board, I am not sure your data is complete. With new board members elected in the fall and seated in December, those surveyed may or may not have knowledge of past or even present training.

Finding #1: "Not all school boards in Monterey County budget for or take advantage of available school board training."

District Response: The respondent disagrees with this finding.

San Antonio has not made a practice of allocating specific or an exact amount of funds in each year's budget for "Board Training". The district does allocate/budget sufficient funds each year for training in other object codes to cover training for the board, administration, teachers and other staff members. The amount of these funds varies from year to year depending on need and the fiscal situation of the district, which limits training for everyone. With the budget cuts already imposed so far this year and the proposed cuts for the 2002-2003 school year, training for next year may need to be severely cut.

Board members at San Antonio are consistently updated on current education , legislative and legal topics in a variety of ways: periodicals from educational associations such as CSBA, ACSA, Ed Source, School Services of California, subscriptions to newsletters, updates by staff on current issues affecting our district, attendance by board members to events sponsored by educational organizations and training put on for board members by the Monterey County Office Of Education. Board members are invited to attend training meetings with the superintendent on budget, personnel, special education and other relevant topics. Board members are not always available to attend events as they also have full-time occupations of their own.

Finding #2: “School board have ultimate responsibility for school district resources and personnel, including the superintendent.”

District Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendation #1: “Provide a budget for school board training.”

District Response: This recommendation will not be implemented due to the size of the district.

To provide a budget for school board training exclusively is not warranted in a district with a total ADA of 200 students. San Antonio School District will continue to provide funding for school board training at the direction of the board based upon their expressed needs and within the fiscal limitations of the district. Whether such funding is given a specific designation object code label of “Board Training” is not a significant issue. If a board training expense is expected to occur in the next budget year and is known at the time of budget development and approval, then it may be designated as such in the budget. Otherwise, board-training expenses will be part of broader budget categories for staff development. This in no way limits the board to participate in appropriate and needed training.

Recommendation #2: “Provide address to training, at a minimum in the following areas: parliamentary procedure, Ralph M. Brown Act, budget management, team building, cooperative boardsmanship, California Education Code and new legislation.”

District Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

This recommendation is in the process of being implemented as part of the normal procedures of the district in both a formal and informal, group and individual manner to best meet the individual needs of members. Such training occurs over time as topics arise in the normal course of business. For example, training about the budget has been on going over the past few months as the governor has recommended legislation to make budget cuts within this school year. The board needs to know the day to day impacts for their already adopted budget and the impacts for the budget that they will be building for the next school year. This type of training is on going, practical and very productive.

Recommendation #3 "Work with Monterey County Office of Education to develop school board training."

District Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

MCOE provided training for new board members in December 2002 which was attended by both our new board members and other board members as a refresher course. The County Superintendent Bill Barr will be providing training in "Brown Act" procedures for the San Antonio Board this year.

Recommendation #4: "Attend as many California School Board Association workshops as determined necessary."

District Response: This recommendation will not be implemented as written because it is not reasonable to limit training to just CSBA nor require attendance at workshops when information can be gained elsewhere at less expense and less effort. Other providers include Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and the Small School District Association (SSDA) which has a conference each March and training during the year that specifically addresses small school districts.

Above are the responses of our governing board as required by Sections 933 and 933.05 of the California Penal Code, to the Findings and Recommendations in the 2001 Monterey County Grand Jury Report dated January 2, 2002.

The responses were approved by the San Antonio Union School District, our governing body, on March 7, 2002.

Sincerely,



Susan L. Gerard
District Superintendent



Ned T. Bowler
Board President
San Antonio Union School District

C: Dr. Bill Barr, County Superintendent of Schools
Board of Trustees for San Antonio Union School District